

**REBUILD**

Boosting Livelihoods

**GLOBAL  
REFUGEE FORUM  
PROGRESS REVIEW**

**FROM PLEDGES TO PROGRESS,  
HAVE WE DELIVERED?**

The 2025 Global Refugee Forum  
Progress Review Meeting

**Report**



## Overview

The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Progress Review was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 15–17 December 2025. The event assessed progress on pledges made at the 2023 GRF, identified gaps, and outlined next steps toward the 2027 GRF. Key priorities included:

- Expanding support for refugees and host countries.
- Advancing implementation of multi-stakeholder pledges framework complementing country, regional, and global-level supports.
- Directing efforts to areas needing further support.

## Key Achievements

Despite the challenging context, the forum reported progress toward achieving several multistakeholder goals. To streamline and structure the process, the multistakeholder pledges among UNHCR, government agencies, partners and relevant stakeholders announced at GRF 2023 were tracked, while recognizing that some may contribute to more than one of the outcomes. Three key positive impacts in supporting the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) Nexus responses to refugees and forced displacement:

1. **Growing Participation and Integration:** The pledge has become a key convening platform, fostering alignment with other GRF commitments, including those on agriculture and climate action. Refugee led organizations visibly shaped policy dialogue.
2. **Advancing the Policy Agenda:** Six major roundtables advanced the HDP Nexus agenda by building momentum, sharing good practices, and identifying scalable models. These included sessions on the HDP Nexus, implementation in Africa, links with agriculture and food systems, and strengthening collaboration. Two critical discussions focused on financing: one on multiplying impactful investments through innovative and blended mechanisms, and another on scaling climate finance by embedding displacement into adaptation strategies while addressing barriers such as risk perceptions, fragmented funding, and data gaps.
3. **Financing Solutions;** The pledge has increased focus on innovative financing mechanisms, including outcome-based funding, blended finance, and climate-linked investments. outcome-based funding, blended finance, and climate-linked investments.

## Key Lessons Learned from the Forum

<p>Shrinking Fiscal Space</p>	<p>The UN system has undergone significant efficiency reforms across the humanitarian, development, and peace spheres. Additionally, the fiscal space that traditionally enabled robust Official Development Assistance (ODA) is shrinking as donor countries prioritize domestic economic demands. Yet the number of refugees and displaced people has continued to rise since 2023 GRF.</p>
<p>The urgency of our collective responsibility</p>	<p>To remain fully present to the need of protecting displaced people: - upholding the fundamental principles of humanitarian protection and defending international law have never been more critical working toward this vital mission. A framework for action of a whole-of-society approach offers the most viable pathway for envisaging the future for displaced people and for addressing growing needs amid shrinking resources.</p>
<p>Localization of aid is not charity</p>	<p>Localisation is a delivery standard. Local actors are central to impact, sustainability, and accountability. It is an imperative and responsible way to deliver impactful and sustainable humanitarian assistance.</p>
<p>Genuine partnership and coordination models need redesign.</p>	<p>The willingness to collaborate between national and international actors is evident, but the challenge lies in finding a dignified and risk-sharing manner to achieve this. Fair partnerships are crucial to demanding shared power, shared learning, and shared responsibility.</p>
<p>Efficiency Reforms</p>	<p>The conversation on the capacity of local actors, including RLOs, to deliver large-scale programs should be reframed to include innovative approaches to shared learning. This process of innovation is a crucial step in safeguarding donor funding and ensuring it is utilized for the intended purpose.</p>

## Spotlighting City Leadership in Refugee Inclusion

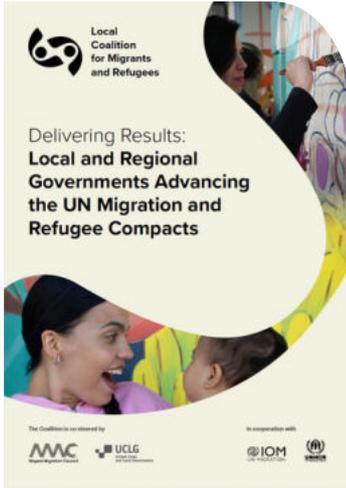
City representatives joined the international community in translating global commitments into local impact. Local pledges emphasized climate action, job creation, and protection of vulnerable groups. In a side event tagged "From Pledges to Progress: Cities Turning Global Compact on Refugees Commitments into Local Impact" "The Local Coalition for Migrants and Refugees, co-steered by United Cities and Local Governments, the Mayors Migration Council, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, Milan City, Mexico City, Ramallah, Koboko Municipality, RELON Kenya, Nairobi City County Government(NCCG) showcasing local and regional governments advancements to the refugee compact.



Susan Kimani, Nairobi County Deputy Director-Youth, Sports, Talent (second from left) shares' insights on scaling Nairobi County impact and shaping the path forward.

### Key messaging from the panelists included:

- Local leadership creates policy coherence by institutionalizing coordination mechanisms and embedding inclusion in municipal plans and budgets.
- From inclusive climate action to connecting newcomers to jobs and protecting those most vulnerable, pledges show that local solutions drive global progress.
- Local pledges consistently strengthen whole-of-society and whole-of-government principles by including local partners in local policymaking.
- Despite major contributions, local and regional Governments (LRG's) face four persistent barriers: shrinking operating space, growing national disinterest in multilateralism, funding gaps, and coordination constraints.



The event was followed by Local Coalition Launching a Flagship Report on City Pledge Impact. The report demonstrates how local and regional governments (LRGs) are turning the ambitions of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) into tangible, measurable outcomes and provides clear recommendations for Member States and donors. The report highlighted opportunities to unlock the full potential of local leadership: Systematic inclusion in national policymaking; Localized indicators in reporting; Involvement in global governance; and Direct funding for local governments.

### Progress on IRC Supported pledges

Since the 2023 GRF, IRC has been actively implementing integrated programming across key thematic areas, including economic inclusion and social protection, gender equality and GBV prevention, mental health and psychosocial support, child protection, and digital safety. IRC expanded resilience and solutions-focused interventions for refugees, with a particular emphasis on women and girls. IRC supported 3 pledges which were reviewed as follows:

Pledges	Progress Update
<p>Pledge 1: Joint pledge between Nairobi City County Government (NCCG) and Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA).</p> <p>Supported by the <u>Re:BUiLD Program</u> KCCA and NCCG made a <u>Joint City Pledge</u> in 2023 on refugee inclusion that promise to create meaningful impact on the urban refugee population in East Africa. The joint pledges were re-iterated in several side events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCG launch of the <u>Refugee Integration Strategy</u> ensuring refugee access to city services and inclusion in city planning becoming the first county in Kenya with a comprehensive refugee integration plan, positioning the city as a leader in inclusive governance and the development of <u>KCCA's 2026–2030 strategy</u> ensures that refugee inclusion is treated as a core component of Kampala's urban development agenda.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• <u>Re:BUiLD</u> has advanced digital literacy and employability of youth by equipping the Nairobi County Youth One Stop Center with IT equipment- computers, desks, and tents, enabling the digital skilling of over 80 refugees and host community youth.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

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Pledges	Progress Update
<p>Pledge 2: Inclusive refugee response in Kenya (Teach Well Project)</p> <p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Denmark along with LEGO foundation and Grundfos Foundation formed an alliance to respond to the protracted forced displacement situation in Kenya for refugees and host community teachers in Turkana and Garissa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created framework for refugee teacher diploma, combining remote and school-based training with the Ministry of Education, the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC).</li> <li>123 refugee teachers enrolled in public Teacher Training Colleges opening a path to recognized national teacher education for refugee educators.</li> <li>Standardized professional development through Teacher Continuous Capacity Development (TCCD) through competency-based modules, coaching and peer learning, pedagogies, social and emotional learning, and learning through play. This led to a more unified national system for developing the capacity of teachers in refugee-hosting regions.</li> </ul>

Pledges	Progress Update
<p><b>Pledge 3. Education</b>            Building a context-relevant and actionable evidence base about the needs, education interventions, and cost-effectiveness of interventions for children in conflict and crisis – from 2023 and through 2027, the <u>ERICC Research Consortium</u> will build a rigorous, context-relevant and actionable evidence base on education issues in contexts of conflict and protracted crisis, for improving access, quality, and continuity and coherence of education, to drive evidence-based policy, and practice and ultimately to improve equitable, continuous access to quality education and holistic outcomes for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ERICC Research Consortium developed the <u>ERICC Conceptual Framework</u> for education in conflict and crisis for social-level outcomes to conduct systematic evidence-based decision-making.</li> <li>• Established <u>ERICC approach to research agenda co-construction</u>, a participatory approach for researchers and agenda-setting with policymakers.</li> <li>• Future focus-2026-2027: foundational learning, teacher development, cost-effectiveness, equity, and system preparedness against shocks; and equity, justice, marginalization.</li> </ul>
<p><b>New pledges 2025:</b></p>	
<p>Pledge 1: Coordination, Collaboration and Legal Capacity Development: IRC commits to undertake a specific legal capacity development activity or program for 80 community paralegals in humanitarian contexts and to empower refugees to access rights, justice and solutions.</p> <p>Pledge 2: Refugee Inclusion and Hiring: IRC commits to deliver programs to increase the number of refugees they support in local communities by 2027. IRC commits to include and meaningfully engage refugees in the design, implementation and evaluation of refugee rights for legal assistance projects.</p>	

## Refugee-Led Participation

A proud moment was witnessed as Refugee-led Organizations curated and led panel discussions; showed up across panels; linked events; official side events; and pledge moments: centering what matters most to the refugee communities and championing meaningful refugee participation as a tool to enhance global refugee policy.

R-Space an independent, refugee-led forum, organized 27 side events on the margins of GRF Review Meeting demonstrating the power of refugee-led organizing to shape global conversations often missing from formal agendas. The space offered critical dialogue that shifts away from state-centric conversations- toward solutions driven solutions and shape refugee policy from the ground up.

The review identified several areas where progress has been made but also identified significant gaps, often exacerbated by declining funding and political shifts.

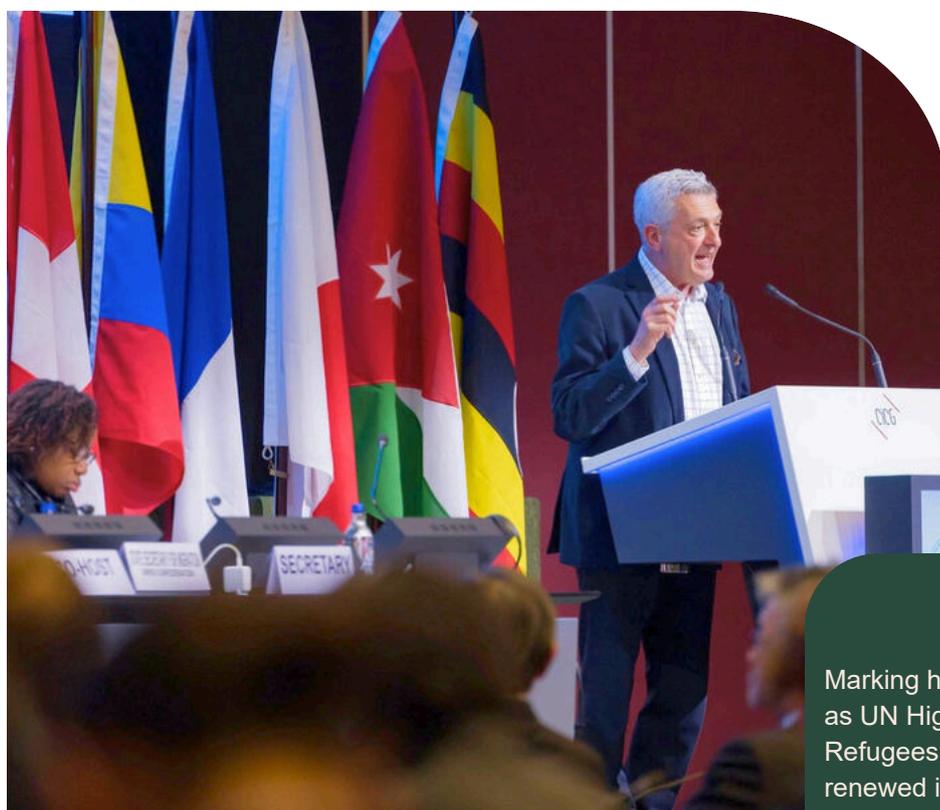
Progress Highlights	Main Challenges and Gaps
<p>Legislative changes in <u>11 states</u> have adopted or strengthened laws and policies supporting the economic inclusion of refugees.eg Brazil, Chile, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Norway, Scotland, Thailand, Zambia, and Zimbabwe</p>	<p>Funding Shortfalls: Insufficient donor funding often leaves ambitious host-country policy pledges under-resourced.</p>
<p>Increased Referrals: <u>RefugePoint</u>, supported over 31,600 refugees to access resettlement during the two years leading up to the Progress Review.</p>	<p>Decreased Resettlement Opportunities: Global resettlement opportunities saw a sharp decline from 189,000 in 2024 to likely fewer than 30,000 in 2025.</p>
<p>Access to Justice: The GRF Legal Community Pledge reported significant quantitative progress in providing direct legal assistance and an increase in refugee family reunification permits.</p>	<p>Persistent Barriers: Regulatory obstacles and widespread poverty continue to hinder refugee self-reliance and inclusion, despite some improvements in the justice and legal sector.</p>

IRC joined the multistakeholder pledges on refugee participation and localization in 2023, these priorities are reflected in our programming. Through the Re:BUiLD program, we have supported Pamoja Trust to advance refugee leadership, strengthen refugee-led organizations, and spotlight refugee-led research in global policy forums such as the World Urban Forum 2024 and the Africa Commission on People and Human Rights 2025. These initiatives remain central to our pursuit of durable solutions for refugees.

## Rallying Call and Next steps

In the face of shrinking humanitarian funding and the rise in anti-refugee rhetoric, how do we practically evolve to meet the current moment and ways it can be strengthened given the challenging global political landscape. How do we assess scalable participation models and how do we develop practical strategies?

Looking ahead to GRF 2027, the refugee system must build on progress made so far to recognize meaningful refugee participation as essential for all solutions. This means more states include refugee advisors in their delegations, donors provide more quality and flexible funding for Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs), and all stakeholders advance greater inclusion in co-design and co-decision on global policies, for and with refugees and RLOs. As the pledge community moves toward GRF 2027, a key priority is to expand the network of committed partners bringing together host countries, development banks, regional organizations, and private sector actors and to identify opportunities for pledge matching and developing innovative models that foster collaboration and co-create context-specific, sustainable solutions.



Marking his final public engagement as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi calls for renewed international solidarity and strengthened support for refugees at the closing session of the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review 2025. © UNHCR/Pierre Albouy